

POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT		GENERAL ORDERS	
SUBJECT: School Resource Officers		NUMBER: 2-27	
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2001		REVIEW DATE:	
AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:		APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff	
CALEA STANDARDS: 44.2.4		VLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.04.05	

NOTE:

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

INDEX WORDS:

Juvenile
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I. POLICY:

The involvement of young people in violent crime is a tragic reality of our community. Compared with the larger community, however, schools are safer places for our youth. Unfortunately, public schools are no longer a safe haven for students: learning co-exists with weapons, drug trafficking, and violence. As an outgrowth of the department's mission priorities which include crime prevention and juvenile intervention, this order establishes the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. The SRO represents a law enforcement presence in a community: in this case, the community is a public school. The primary purpose of the SRO is to reduce and prevent crime by and against students, committed primarily in or in connection with the assigned school. The SRO performs other roles in addition to enforcement: the SRO conducts crime-prevention programs, functions as an additional educational resource, acts as a referral agent to help students obtain community resources not otherwise available, and guides students in solving problems.

[Agencies may wish to consult additional resources on SRO programs available through the Department of Criminal Justice Services. Contact the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) for the following publications: Virginia School Resource Officer Manual and other relevant publications. For further information or to contact the Virginia

*Center for School Safety, consult the VCSS web site at:
<<http://www.vaschoolsafety.com/>>.]*

II. PURPOSE:

To define the role and responsibilities of the SRO.

III. PROCEDURES: ADMINISTRATIVE

A. Selection and training criteria

1. Candidates for SRO assignment shall demonstrate the following characteristics.
 - a. Have an interest in working with youth.
 - b. Be a member of the agency in good standing and have at least two years of experience in patrol duties.
 - c. Volunteer for the SRO assignment.
 - d. Undergo a screening by both agency and school officials as to suitability and temperament for the assignment.
 - e. Demonstrate an ability to work with diverse groups.
 - f. Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
 - g. Demonstrate knowledge of juvenile law, procedures, and appropriate community resources.
 - h. Supervisory approval.
2. *[Discuss local application requirements here.]*
3. Before assignment to SRO, the officer shall complete all requisite training requirements.
 - a. *[Discuss local training regimen here.]*

B. General administrative requirements

1. For immediate operational purposes, the SRO reports to the on-duty law-enforcement supervisor. For administrative and most operational purposes, the SRO reports to the patrol commander.

2. Each day, the SRO shall report his or her activities and schedule to the principal of the school to which assigned. The SRO may receive assignments both from the principal and the on-duty supervisor or patrol commander. Both school and department officials shall be kept current on activities. Any school assignment that conflicts with law enforcement duties shall be referred to the patrol commander when the SRO and the school administrator cannot resolve the matter.
 - a. The SRO shall report to the school one-half hour before classes begin and shall not end the tour of duty until a half-hour following the end of classes. The SRO shall adjust his or her schedule, as necessary, to appear at school for weeknight or weekend activities.
3. The work priorities of the SRO are minimally determined by the school-community task force. ***[Define the purpose and constituency of the task force, if it exists.]*** The task force executive board sets long-term goals and provides the mission statement which guides the program.
 - a. The SRO shall confer both with the principal and the school-community task force to formulate crime-prevention strategies.
4. The SRO shall serve in the capacity for a minimum of three years.
5. The SRO shall not become involved in administering school discipline. Further, SROs shall not perform disciplinary or security tasks normally performed by staff or faculty, such as lunchroom or hall duty.
6. The SRO shall take annual leave to correspond with school vacations. When the school is not in session, the SRO may be assigned elsewhere at the discretion of the patrol commander.
7. SROs shall not be permitted to accumulate overtime for after-school events, functions, or classes. Overtime work requests shall be processed according to agency policy. ***[Agencies may wish to substitute language which allows SROs a flexible schedule in order to work after-school events.]*** SROs shall be permitted, however, to provide extra security work to be compensated through school funds. ***[Consult DCJS on the possible availability of grant funds for this purpose.]***
8. SROs shall make themselves available for conferences with students, parents, and faculty members. ***[Agencies may wish to include a statement about the confidentiality or any such conferences, except where reports of criminal events are concerned.]***

- a. The SRO shall serve as a member of the student services committee and shall therefore know what community service agencies offer assistance to young people and their families.
- b. SROs may attend PTA meetings and other relevant activities where their presence benefits the school and the community.

C. Evaluation criteria

Although the standard personnel evaluation form shall be used for SROs, the rating supervisor shall address the following topics in the narrative portion:

1. Degree to which the SRO has constructed and cultivated linkages with social service agencies in the larger community.
2. Skill in using both school and outside resources in solving crime-related problems. Does the SRO provide effective community referrals? Does the SRO exhibit problem-solving skills?
3. Attendance at school functions to become better acquainted with students, parents, and faculty in a social setting.
4. Skill and effectiveness in giving classroom lectures or sessions on criminal justice topics.
5. Skill and effectiveness in communicating with students, faculty, and staff (including skills as a classroom presenter).
6. Degree to which the SRO has applied crime-prevention and law-enforcement strategies to improve the quality of school life.

IV. PROCEDURES: INVESTIGATIVE

A. Reporting requirements

1. Any crime reported to the SRO shall be recorded on standard agency forms. The SRO shall use discretion in recording very minor misdemeanors.
2. The SRO shall periodically assemble crime reports or abstracts of crime reports for the school, the agency, and the school-community task force.

B. Patrol responsibilities

1. SROs shall patrol schools and adjacent properties. SROs shall investigate suspicious persons and activities.

2. For patrol purposes, the SRO shall be properly equipped with an agency marked car, radio, pager, and appropriate report forms. Unless the patrol commander requires otherwise, SROs shall perform duties in uniform.
3. SROs shall transport juveniles according to the requirements of GO 2-8. Transportation of disruptive or suspended students requires permission of the SRO's supervisor.
4. SROs shall assist other law enforcement officers as necessary in any matters pertaining to the school, its students (and their parents) or faculty.

C. Investigative responsibilities

1. Injuries to students or faculty on school property shall be investigated by school personnel unless the injury appears to be a criminal act. ***[The SRO should respond to reports of accidents or injuries, but the SRO's responsibilities at such events should be defined in consultation with school administrators.]***
2. Offenses shall be investigated according to agency policy and practice. Refer to GO 2-29, Juvenile Procedures.
3. ***[Describe the role of SROs at school administrative hearings. Describe procedures governing the release of student information to law-enforcement officers, and the release of police information to school administrators. These procedures may also be outlined in the memorandum of understanding between the school and the law-enforcement agency.]***
 - a. As soon as practicable, the SRO shall notify the principal of any enforcement undertaken.
 - b. At the principal's request, the SRO shall undertake appropriate enforcement against intruders, trespassers, or other unwanted persons who appear on school property.
3. The SRO shall conduct investigative interviews as necessary with anyone. ***[Refer here to any school board policy on law enforcement officers conducting investigative interviews with students on school property.]***

D. Searches and seizures

1. Administrative searches are conducted by school officials and solely under school direction upon reasonable suspicion that the student has violated

school standards of conduct or the law. SROs do not participate in administrative searches except in any of the following instances:

- a. To handle and process any contraband.
 - b. To provide security.
 - c. To protect students and staff.
2. SROs may conduct appropriate searches based on probable cause under any of the circumstances outlined in GO 2-1, -2, -3, or -5. Pat-downs or frisks for weapons are justified based on reasonable suspicion, as outlined in these cited general orders. *[Specific search contexts or issues that must be defined either in the general order or a memorandum of understanding include searches of lockers, student property generally, computers, automobiles, the use of drug dogs and metal detectors, consent searches, and strip searches. Refer to House Document No. 62 of the General Assembly, Guidelines for Student Searches in Public Schools, 2000. The complete text of this document can be found at:*

<http://www.pen.k.12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/ssg.pdf>

An additional on-line resource of interest: New Jersey School Search Policy Manual and Companion Reference Guide, found at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/lps/dcj/school.htm>

Law enforcement agencies and schools must develop a memorandum of understanding as a background to this order. The memorandum must make clear the officer's prerogative to arrest, interview, search, and take into custody. Similarly, the school's prerogatives to search, seize, and interview must be clearly listed.]

3. SROs shall not request school officials to conduct administrative searches for any law-enforcement reason, or to have a school official act as an agent.

[Contact VCSS for sample memoranda of understanding or sample procedures and protocols. Email address for VCSS: vcss@dcjs.state.va.us]